

Third Ward To Main Street Connectivity Project

Blodgett Street Public Meeting No. 1 Minutes

The Third Ward Redevelopment Council (TWRC) and the City of Houston's Planning and Development Department held the second of three public meetings in the Third Ward the week of August 26th, 2002. The purpose of the meetings was to solicit public input on the design of street improvements, landscaping and other amenities to Blodgett, Elgin and OST/Alameda Streets from Scott Street to Main Street. Residents, business owners and other stakeholders along Blodgett Street met with representatives of the TWRC, OST/Alameda TIRZ, the City of Houston's Planning and Development Department and the consultant team, led by M2L Associates, Inc. on Wednesday, August 28th at Pilgrim Community Center to identify issues and opportunities in the corridor. This input will be used to generate ideas for improving the image and function of Blodgett Street. These design concepts will be presented to the stakeholders in late September for review and comments.

AGENDA ITEMS

- I. Consultants presented background of the project and scope of work.
- II. Participants divided into four facilitated, breakout sessions.
- III. Each group was asked to look at three factors within their neighborhoods: 1) the strengths of the corridor; 2) corridor weaknesses; and 3) the potential opportunities and future vision of the corridor.
- IV. Participants presented findings and consultant team presented concluding remarks.

The following information represents the outcome of the discussion group session sorted by aesthetics/perception, safety, infrastructure, transportation, and potential improvements*:

*(Note: number in parentheses indicates the number of times this item was generated)

AESTHETICS/PERCEPTION *(Visible improvements and overall impression of corridor)*

Strengths

- Established businesses and strong neighborhood (3)
- Good location (TSU, Pilgrim Church, HL & P Substation, financial institutions)(3)
- Quality architecture and good housing (2)
- Strong civic association/mission
- Strong history and sense of space
- Mixed land uses
- Variety of income levels

Weaknesses

- Unattractive and abandoned buildings (2)
- Cluttered above ground utilities (2)
- Strong property values
- Lack of a consistent theme
- Land use distributions are sometimes incompatible
- Billboards are too big and not uniform
- Too many drug stores

SAFETY *(Unsafe conditions relating to pedestrian and automobile uses and functions)*

Strengths

Weaknesses

- Unsafe environment
- Small turning radiuses into driveways

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- Lack of a four way stop at La Branch
- Traffic signals are not consistent, lack of stop signs
- Poor street lighting from Ennis to Main Street (2)
- Poor distribution of street lights (2)
- Inconsistent timing of traffic signals
- Traffic speeds are frequently above the speed limit

INFRASTRUCTURE (*Roadway widths, utilities, traffic signals, etc.*)

Strengths

- Good street drainage (2)
- Large esplanades
- Good landscaping on west of Alameda
- Good setbacks
- Good pedestrian access

Weaknesses

- Inconsistent street widths
- Sidewalks and ramps are not adequate and in poor condition
- Inconsistent quality and quantity of street lights (2)
- Lack of pedestrian activities and movement (2)
- Lack of general maintenance, landscaping and infrastructure (3)
- Existing street trees are uplifting and cracking existing sidewalks
- Lack of sufficient landscape maintenance along TSU campus edges
- Bus stops are not in good condition (2)

TRANSPORTATION (*Automobile circulation, mass transit.*)

Strengths

- Primary east-west corridor to Highway 59 and downtown (2)

Weaknesses

- Lack of direct east and west bus service to Highway 288 and Main Street
- High traffic speeds and traffic congestion problems
- Too much truck traffic

POTENTIAL STREET IMPROVEMENTS (*Design ideas for improving the corridor*)

- Decorative lights with a strong theme (3)
- More bus stops of a higher quality (3)
- Street signs for way finding (museums, universities, light rail to Main Street) (3)
- Flowering landscape trees (Crape Myrtle) (2)
- No overhead utility wires and a reduction of utility poles (2)
- Consistent streetscape design (2)
- Special paving at street crossings (2)
- Improved signalization (2)
- Organized maintenance program (2)
- Build on sense of place

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- Improve and clean up alleys
- Provide public meeting space
- Provide street trees
- Nice intersection paving, like Alameda
- Provide bike lanes
- More street lights at Live Oak, La Branch, and Del Rio
- Esplanade plantings
- Upgrade building facades
- Influence land uses
- Creative land taking
- Recreational opportunities with TSU
- Public art
- On-street parking for residents and visitors
- Smoother traffic flow